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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide some guidelines for instructors developing a course on Survival Education, this project outline may be used as an actual pattern for course design: also, the administrator/supervisor may utilize this as an evaluative tool for examining other similar course presentations. Because a contemporary survival course must take into consideration contemporary problems, the project stresses throughout that Survival Education is a very complex subject: the student must learn techniques applicable to many environments or situations. The paper gives a brief survey of the history of Survival Education, and lists societal needs and the principles, goals, and objectives of Survival Education. It then outlines an implementation strategy and discusses funding, criteria for selection of components and settings, and suggestions for instructors and for selection of activities. Teaching strategies, a course plan, and a course outline are also provided, as well as a concluding section on evaluation methods. (CM)

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SURVIVAL EDUCATION - SOME THOUGHTS

by

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January 1981

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PROJECT INTENT

With Survival Education becoming increasingly more popular as both experientially-based learning and a learning "vehicle", many institutions such as UNC offer it as a bonafide credited course. In this context, this project has been developed to provide a set of guidelines, examples, or at the very least, something to consider for future instructors or administrators. The author feels that an injustice to both the Survival Education field and to perspective students would be incurred if a myopic and "limited" course was offered without respect to the total picture of survival needs and Survival Education. Hopefully, this project will enable the practitioner to present a well rounded, comprehensive treatise of Survival Education rather than a misleading, tunnel-visioned edition.

PROJECT DESIGN

Since this is to be a "working" project, the design will be congruent to that of a course design or outline. It is intended that the practitioner will be able to use this project as a designing tool from which to glean ideas from or actually pattern his course design after. Additionally, the administrator/supervisor may be able to utilize this project as an evaluation tool when examining other similar course presentations.

Particularly with this latter point in mind, it may be well to note, that the author does not presume to be the "final word" in Survival Education. Survival Education is a complex, multi-faceted field of teaching. For any one individual to claim a dominance in all of these facets would be presumptuous at best. Hence, the person using this project as an evaluative tool should

temper her comments and criticisms with this realization, if the course that is presented does not exactly mix with that of the project's.

Despite this lack of a comprehensive level of expertise among current Survival Education practitioners, there does exist a number of recognized survival experts, such as Bradford Angier, Colonel Townsend Whalen, Anthony Greenbank, Eugene Fear, Robert Stoffel, and Timothy Kneeland, to name but a few. Along with these individuals there have been and still is a number of well recognized institutions which are engaged in Survival Education. These institutions include: the United States Air Force Survival School, the Canadian Survival School, the United States Navy S.E.R.E. (Survival/Evasion/Resistance/Escape) School, the Survival Education Association, the National Search and Rescue Coordinators Association (N.S.R.C.A.), and the Survival and Flight Equipment Association (S.A.F.E.). See Appendix A and B for examples of two of these organizations.

Despite the fact that these individuals and organizations exist, the field of Survival Education is still inundated with the so called "experts". By experts the author suggests those individuals who know one small facet of Survival Education and from this fact, claim or at least do not discourage, the title of Survival Expert. This can be not only unfortunate but disastrous since many people naturally look to these experts as a reliable source of survival information, regardless of the survival situation, often with dubious or tragic results.

Many of these experts are academically strong but experientially weak. That is, they have much information but most of it is taken from books or hearsay. They are experience poor and as a result generally offer courses which are either "milk toast" or incredibly difficult. The impact on the student is minimal or overwhelming to the extent of creating a negative learning situation.

Conversely, other so called experts (but certainly not all) shun academics

as unrealistic and concentrate on the experiential factor. One can often see a concentration on the "attention getting" activities such as living-off-the-land, or primitive Indian skills, to the virtual exclusion of any positive benefits offered by the classroom.

RATIONALE

"The most important education, is that which leads to personal survival"

W.I. Thomas

Two major functions of education are to provide a benefit for the individual and secondly, to provide a benefit to the supporting society. If the person is viewed in the holistic sense, that is, a combination of physical, spiritual, and mental qualities, then education for the person should provide for learning and growth in the physical, spiritual, and mental areas.

To this end, Survival Education can be utilized as a learning vehicle to provide the arena, the problems, and the highly visible goals from which the individual can develop his abilities and confidence in a more holistic sense.
in other words
Stated otherwise, Survival Education can be utilized as a teaching/learning tool.

Additionally, Survival Education can provide a benefit both to the individual and society by teaching those skills which would enable the individual and ultimately society (assuming enough individuals survive) to survive an adverse situation or a catastrophe. Thus, Survival Education can contribute to the health and welfare of not only the individual but also the nation.

HISTORY OF SURVIVAL EDUCATION

Throughout many Survival Education oriented courses the point has been alluded to that our pioneering forefathers, the Indians, and earlier descendants didn't need survival training because they lived it. To paraphrase this conception, "everyday was a survival experience". While true, this terminology is misleading. Our ancestors were not usually dropped into a survival situation but rather were more often eased into one, with a good background of adapting and experience. They developed tools and a technology from which survival needs could be met more easily. An example of this development is the tinder-box or "coal horn" which modern technology has replaced with the butane lighter.

What can be said about the difference between modern and ancestral mankind is perhaps the notion of visibility. Human survival needs have not changed, i.e. people still need water, food, a correct temperature, etc., but what has changed is our ability to distinguish the difficulty in fulfilling these needs. Whereas, ancestral man had to build a fire to create warmth, while modern man turns up the thermostat.

In part, this lack of visibility or seeing the true nature of satisfying one's needs, is responsible for the feelings of a separatedness between man and nature has evolved. This apparent separation has been keenly felt by many, particularly in the 1970's, the age of environmental education as envisioned by those involved in Outdoor Education.¹

It was in this context that Survival Education became a part of many school and organizational curriculums. One of the institutional leaders within the domain of Higher Education was Brigham Young University (BYU) and its key person, Larry Dean Olsen. Unique in its length and background the BYU program was utilized by many program planners, i.e. Dick Jamison's Highland Survival School (see Appendix C).

Two additional factors which altered the course of Survival Education in the United States were the military survival schools, and a subsequent upwelling of organizations such as the Survival Education Association (see Appendix A) and the Colorado School of Outdoor Living (see Appendix D). While military schools had existed long before the upsurge of interest in Survival Education, the increasing number of ex-military survival instructors appeared to create a greater awareness of and an axillary interest in Survival Education. With a greater number of "qualified" individuals to teach survival, not only was the interest in Survival Education renewed, but the ability to supply that demand was enhanced.

With the sparking of interest in Survival Education, there came the development and growth of organizations and individuals promoting survival teaching. Two such individuals were Gene Fear, with his Survival Education Association (S.E.A.) and Bob Whitmore, and the Wilderness Institute of Survival Education (W.I.S.E.). The following diagram illustrates this cyclic relationship of interest and input (also see Appendix B).

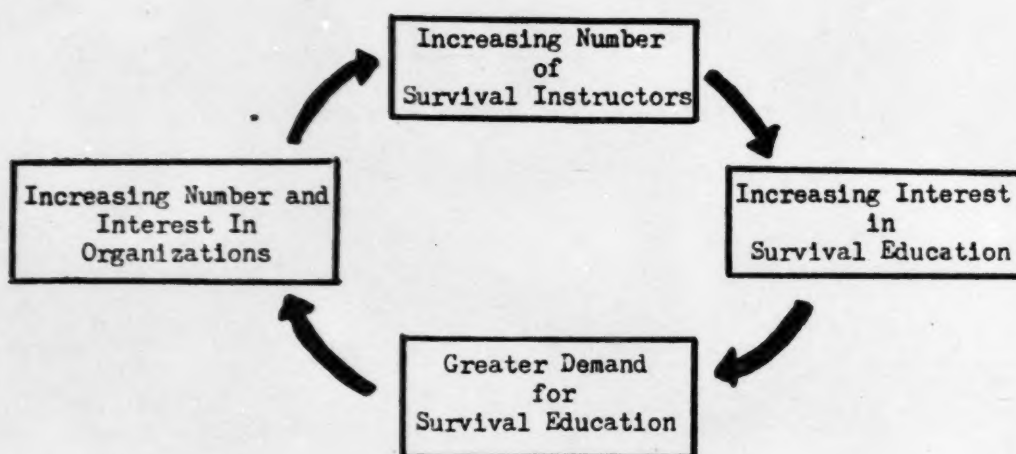


DIAGRAM 1
Survival Interest and Input

In summary, perhaps the most important point to keep in mind when beginning a survival course patterned after our descendants was that the pioneer or indian was not usually "thrust" into a survival experience. Rather that individual was trained, often by his elders, and given experience before being placed into a demanding and often fear provoking situation. With this in mind, is it reasonable or prudent for our students to be exposed to the the rigors of a Survival Education experience without being taught or given prior experience? Is not this prior training the cornerstone of most successful (as opposed to glamorous) programs? The experiential factor should certainly be utilized, but in a manner which is conducive to both good teaching and effective Survival Education.

SOCIETAL NEEDS

With the development of Survival Education the question of "need" has risen with increasing frequency. Does society need Survival Education or is it an educational frill? A frill that will be brushed aside with reduced budgeting such as Proposition 13's. Unlike the military, civilian survival programs do not have a built in rationale and do not have an extremely high utilitarian purpose since the average camper may never need that specialized training.² Thus the answer appears to be a mixture of yes and no's. Some Survival Education programs have been reduced or cut, i.e. Survival Education Association.

Despite this fact, the 1970's have seen the establishment of many programs featuring survival training in their curriculum.³ Many of these programs feature one of two designs: academic training followed by a field experience (usually approximately an overnight trip) or a field experience during which those aspects which are applicable to that situation are taught.

Obviously, both types of program designs have their strengths and weaknesses. Both types of programs and other types not mentioned have their advocates, which proclaim that their program meets some societal needs. The question arises as to what these needs are. The following list was compiled to supply some ideas as to what these societal needs might be.

1. The need for adventure and risk-taking.
2. The need for self-sufficiency and a lessened dependence on technology.
3. The learning of camping skills.
4. The development of inter/intra personal communication skills.
5. A need to enhance environmental awareness.
6. Learning primitive survival skills.
7. A combining of cognitive processes (thinking skills) with physical activities, that is, using your total resources; mental, physical, and spiritual, to solve an identifiable problem (such as staying alive).
8. The need to develop organizational abilities for small groups.
9. Learning to "live-off-the-land".
10. The need for experiencing the wilderness.
11. Enhancing the individual's ability to problem solve.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Survival Education is the teaching of those skills and attitudes which would enable an individual to live through a hostile or life threatening situation. It combines the physical, mental, and spiritual talents of the individual with a specific set of skills to accomplish a highly desirable and visible goal- life.

Survival Education utilizes the outdoor environment as a learning

medium.. By placing the individual in a simulated real life situation it is assumed that the individual will be better prepared to identify and deal with life threatening situations, problem-solving, and inter/intra group communications.

PRINCIPLES OF SURVIVAL EDUCATION

The following are some principles concerning Survival Education:

1. S.E. can be utilized as a teaching "vehicle", i.e. using S.E. to vicariously teach other things like values clarification.
2. S.E. imposes a simulated situation rather than an actual life threatening factor.
3. S.E. can be utilized to develop a person's self confidence and self concept (Heaps and Thortonson, 1973⁴ and Howard, 1972⁵). (See Appendix E).
4. S.E. can be used to enhance an individual's problem solving abilities.
5. S.E. can be utilized to teach small group communications processes.
6. S.E. can be an adventure/learning component within a curriculum or program.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF SURVIVAL EDUCATION

The following is a partial list of those goals and objectives which can be realized through a course in Survival Education.

1. The individual will increase his chances of surviving, i.e. living through, a hostile situation.
2. The individual's self concept will be enhanced.
3. The individual will increase his/her abilities to adapt and adjust to a particular environment.
4. Survival Education will enhance the problem solving abilities of an individual.

5. The participant will experience a greater environmental and personal awareness.
6. The individual will be better prepared to work both individually and in a small group context.

IMPLEMENTAION STRATEGY

To implement a Survival Education course when none exists the following strategy can be utilized to aid the practitioner in the promotion of the course and its development.⁶

I. Preliminary Stage

- A. Goals/Format/Budget
- B. Establish a "team" of key personnel.
- C. Needs Assessment
- D. Formal meeting of interested people

II. Initial Stage

- A. Identify key administrators.
- B. Publicize the program.
- C. Establish a steering committee (for Survival Education this should be composed of individual which at least have had exposure to the field).
- D. Establish program evaluation techniques.

III. Development Stage

- A. Revise program if necessary.
- B. Formally plan program.

IV. Implementation Stage

- A. Conduct course.
- B. Use an on-going evaluation process.
- C. Distribute evaluation results.
- D. Use effective public relations to advertise program to public

IV. Follow-up Stage

- A. Enlist student help
- B. Approach administration for additional support when appropriate

FUNDING

Funding for the Survival Education course will be both intrinsic and extrinsically located. Intrinsically located funding sources include the school budget, special allocations, etc. Extrinsic sources would include such factors as special fees, grants, etc. Despite the funding sources, the following principles should be considered when funding arrangements need to be discussed.⁷

1. The program, if recognized as an integral part of education, should receive the same consideration as other curricular programs of similar kind, in budgeting.
2. Transportation should be provided for Survival Education (added by by author), experiences in the same way as other beyond the classroom experiences.
3. Materials should be provided in the same manner as other curricular programs.
4. Medical, hospital, and liability insurance coverage should be provided to cover learning experiences beyond the classroom, the same as the in classroom experiences.

Potential costs of the Survival Education course would consist of the following items.

1. Special equipment (i.e. matchboxes, whistles, etc.)
2. Transportation requirements
3. Land use fees
4. Utilization of school equipment
5. Instructor expenses and fees.
6. Miscellaneous expenses
7. Extrinsically located costs, (aircraft, automobiles-junked, etc.)
8. Emergency equipment and clothing
9. Support equipment (lanterns, tents, fuel, etc.)

The preceding funding considerations are made with the assumption that the school will provide a minimum amount of support material. Depending on the circumstances, the school can elect to act as the equipment/clothing supplier, thus insuring a greater degree of standardization and safety. Secondly, the school can only provide the minimums, and leave equipment and clothing needs to be supplied by the students. This procedure is a riskier, less standardized but essential cheaper method. This decision must be made in light of the financial status and inclinations of the school, the program, and the students.

CRITERIA FOR COMPONENT SELECTION

The following criteria should be considered when utilizing natural, personnel, or activities within the Survival Education arena.

1. Resources should be utilized in an environmentally sound fashion. With a Survival Education course there may be some environmental usage. The instructor should determine whether a particular use

such as collecting wild edible plants or constructing a fire pit, is warranted and whether how this activity can be accomplished with a minimum of environmental damage.

2. Resources should be available and in sufficient quantities.
3. When choosing an area, the instructor should insure that an area is representative of the general environment and not a special case, i.e. strictly using a forested area in a locality which is predominantly open and exposed.
4. Hazards or potential hazards should be identified to the students, preferably in writing with adequate safeguarding procedures, before the actual field experience.
5. The instructor should choose resources which are going to be used for learning purposes which are congruent and understandable to the students and their abilities. Choosing a resource to talk about which has no practical significance to the students may be a waste of valuable time.

Personnel

1. The instructor should NOT ASSUME anything as far as student actions or common sense.
2. Instructors should check the physical and mental condition of her students prior to the field experience. Individuals who possess some "shaky" traits will need to be more closely supervised or left back at school.
3. Instructors should maintain an adequate instructor to student ratio. This ratio is dependent on factors such as weather, hazards in the area, students, and the competence of the instructors. A suggested ratio might be one instructor to ten or less students.
4. The instructor needs to insure an adequate method of observation. This is

an area where many instructors assume too much and watch too little.

5. Instructors should insure that appropriate medical and emergency information is known prior to the field experience both by him and his staff.

Activities

1. Activities should be relevant and appropriate for the situation.
2. Instructors should insure the safety of an activity before it is performed.
3. Before selecting activities, the emotional and physical levels of the students need to be considered.
4. Activities should be used to enrich and intensify student learning.
5. Activities should be from simple to more complex and be within the student's abilities so as to avoid negative learning.

Whatever the instructor decides to use as resources for her class, it is important to keep in mind a sense of adaptability and opportunity teaching. Many factors can have an impact on the Survival Education experience (weather, location, illness, etc.). Fortunately, there are also many unplanned teaching opportunities which arise. The instructor needs to be able to adjust her teaching plans to meet both sets of circumstances.

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

Much of the population interested in Survival Education will be made up of traditional college students. Many will be inexperienced in the outdoors, and

lacking in those life experiences which instill self confidence and common sense. In a word, many will be flighty and as a consequence both activities and supervision need to be carefully considered and delineated.

Additionally, peer pressure and the role of "image" can be significant factors. Peer pressure phenomena can lead to poor judgement or a lack of awareness within the individual. The "image" phenomenon can create a masking effect within the self conscious student and prevent him from relaying important information, such as "I'm sick", to the instructor.

Setting:

The Survival Education course, while global in intent, is designed to take place in a variety of locations. There are a number of setting requirements which need to be considered when choosing a field site. The following are some of these requirements:

1. An area which is governed by an enabling agency, such as the U.S. Forest Service, which will allow a Survival Course to take place.
2. Availability of water, firewood, and safe shelter sites.
3. Sufficient shelter building materials.
4. A representative sample of indigenous plant and animal life.
5. A field site area which is generally free of hazardous conditions, i.e. avalanches, rock fall, etc.
6. An open area in which to effect signalling demonstrations and other activities requiring an open space (such as helicopter work).
7. Because a Survival Course contains an inherent amount of land use, (procuring firewood, utilizing edible plants, etc.) the area chosen as a field site should not be either pristine or unique. Rather, this type of activity calls for multi-use, recreational land and not remote wilderness.

delicate

TEACHING STRATEGY

The Survival Education course is designed around a variety of teaching strategies. The overall intent of this holistic approach is to use the right strategy for the right circumstance. It is felt that this methodology will produce the most favorable results as well as making effective use of the available resources. The following list represents a number of those strategies.

1. The Survival Education course will be global in content, but with an emphasis on that particular location where the course is taught and the prevailing weather.
2. Academic training will precede the field experience. This in turn will be followed by more academics to "tie everything together". See the following diagram for a further explanation of this strategy.

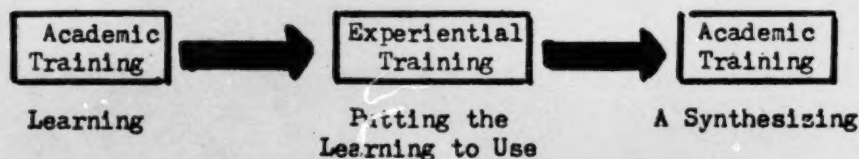


DIAGRAM 2
Academic/Impact Strategy

3. The contemporary needs and potential situations will be stressed rather than the more sensational but less realistic activities such as fire by friction or primitive skills. Some examples of these contemporary needs would be: short term survival (24 hours or less, which is the category into which 98% of the current survival situations fall.⁸), catastrophe survival, and survival in a time of disrupted services (electricity, medical, etc.).
4. A progression of easy to more difficult situations involving the individual to problem-solve will be presented.
5. Human physiology considerations will be stressed, since it is believed that knowing body needs and responses will prove to be very beneficial to the students, both in their striving to adapt and in the retention of their new knowledge.

COURSE PLAN

As previously stated, the Survival Education course will be structured to provide the most efficient and adaptable teaching system. Particularly in the field experience, time and circumstance (opportunity) teaching strategies as well as demonstration/performance methodologies will be utilized.

In a holistic sense, the course is designed to emphasize those aspects of survival which are deemed most important, i.e. human physiology, the mental aspects of survival, getting rescued, etc.. These major considerations will be followed up by experiential training primarily conducted in the field. It is in the experiential part of the course, that students will be able to experience both the opportunity to practice what they have learned but also experience in a small degree, those feelings of apprehension, uncertainty, and uncomfortableness that are inherent to any survival situation.

Following the field experience, time will be devoted to debriefings and critiques in the safety of the classroom. The purpose of this follow-up academic style approach is to allow for a synthesization of what the students have learned and experienced. It is at this stage that the true significance of what they have learned can be synthesized into an individually usable form.

COURSE OUTLINE

The course outline is designed to provide direction and continuity to the practitioner. It provides the framework from which the Survival Educator can fill in the design with content. While the course outline should not be confused with the course lesson plans, it should be used in conjunction with the content presentation. The following is an example of a course outline which may be used in a Survival Education course.

- I. Introduction of course
 - A. Instructors
 - B. Overview
 - C. Objectives
 - D. Requirements
 - E. Administration- required paperwork (See Appendices F and G).
- II. Priorities of Life
- III. Temperature Considerations
- IV. Water/Food Considerations
- V. Clothing/Equipment Considerations
- VI. Signalling
- VII. Group Organizations and Communications
- VIII. Survival Medicine

Because the field experience can be considered "a course in itself", structuring should be carefully considered to achieve a maximum amount of learning within a specified amount of time. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to provide the students with as much information as possible. Appendix H gives an example of how and what some of this information might be.

Contained within any Survival Education course are not only a course outline and schedule of activities, but also the course lesson plans. Within the lesson plans are the actual substance of what will be taught; the specifics of the course. While each set of lesson plans will be unique to the individual instructor, there are some factors which may be useful to consider when designing lesson plans for a Survival Education course. These factors are as follows:

1. The lesson plan should have a "flow" to it, which allows for leading into each subject in a logical manner. For example, you might consider going through the body's need for food, its real necessity, what types of food are important and why, before searching for edible plants.
2. The lesson plan should relate to the needs of the student as well as to the needs of the course requirements.

3. The lesson plan should be comprehensive but not to the extent of confusing the instructor when she is teaching. Trying to sort through your notes when your facing a group of students is discouraging, at best.

Appendix I is an example of a lesson plan that may be useful to the beginning instructor.

EVALUATION

In evaluating a Survival Education course two factors need to be considered: an evaluation of the course by students and faculty, and an evaluation of the students (i.e. grading). The course will probably be part of a larger program, such as in a school or agency, or it may be a separate entity (i.e. North American Wilderness Survival School). In any event, evaluation of both types, should be accomplished, both for accountability and program vitality.

There has been much literature written about evaluating programs and little if any written about evaluating Survival Education courses. While it is not the purpose of this project to delve too deeply into evaluation, it may be helpful to discuss some of the more salient features of evaluation as they pertain to Survival Education.

Evaluation for an ongoing course in Survival Education should both be formative and summative. Evaluation should not only judge the end product but also play an active role in the program development. In this context, the CSE model developed by Marvin Alkin⁹, appears to be an appropriate methodology. The CSE model uses evaluation as a process of selecting, collecting, and interpreting information for various audiences involved with the program. The following diagram illustrated in flow chart form the conceptualization of the CSE model.



DIAGRAM 3
Stages of the CSE Evaluation Model

In order to clarify some of the often confusing terminology used in evaluation the following terms are defined.

Need Assessment: Determining the program's goals.

Program Planning: Using the information obtained from the needs assessment to construct a new program or modify an existing one.

Formative Evaluation: Evaluation done during the development of the program which leads to program improvement, and a conceptualization of what the program is, and how it works.

Summative Evaluation: Evaluation that looks at the total impact of a program.

Following a formal evaluation, the practitioner should make an effort to disseminate the information to the interested parties. This dissemination can take place at a formal meeting, in memo form, or in a newsletter-type of publication. Regardless, of the delivery vehicle, delivery is the key word. Letting others know about what and how your program works may seem threatening, but can point out unseen weaknesses or potential problems which the practitioner may need to know about. Evaluation should be considered a tool rather than an impediment. Evaluation can be an impediment for poorly designed programs, but then, these programs have no place in Survival Education, where lives are at stake.

Student evaluation needs to be performed for a variety of reasons, each depending upon the institution or circumstances. In some situations just attending a Survival Education course may indicate a satisfactory performance. In the

educational setting, both administrators and the public may be interested in what the student has learned or what are the class objectives. Many know this as "accountability". As a consequence, many institutions place a greater emphasis for grading.

Student evaluation is based on two factors within this project design; an academically oriented written test and a performance test. By using two measures, it is hoped that the cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor domains can be accounted for. While many may scoff at the utilization of a written instrument, the instructor can use this type of measuring device to ascertain the student's understanding of many Survival Education concepts: hypothermia, dehydration, priorities of life, etc. An example of a cold weather survival test is given in Appendix J.

In conducting the performance test, many schemes have been tried. Activities which lend themselves particularly well to being measured include: fire building, making traps and snares, constructing a ground-to-air signal, etc. Observing performance problems is different than actually analyzing those problems.¹⁰ Thus the questioning/answering needs to be supplemented by the defining the problem/observing the student's solution methodology, in the Survival Education situation.

However the performance test is conducted, the evaluator should produce a measurement design which features activities which are relevant, within the student's capabilities, measurable, and defensible as an activity which is important enough to be measured. For example, knowing that the Willow belongs to the Salix family may not be as important as recognizing the fact that the Willow contains salicylic acid or what we know as aspirin. Likewise, being able to light a fire efficiently and quickly may be of greater importance for the contemporary survival student than spending an inordinate amount of time trying to light a fire by friction, an activity that works only in the best of conditions and usually then with difficulty for the survival student.

CONCLUSION

It has been suggested through-out this project that Survival Education is a much more complex subject than is usually envisioned. If one looks past teaching just a specialty, such as cold weather survival, it is readily translucent that a Survival Education course, within the global context, would entail survival techniques for the mountains, deserts, seashores, jungles, arctic regions, and waterways. If one is going to design a Survival Education course that's applicable to the contemporary student, then training that takes into account contemporary problems such as floods, storms, earthquakes, stalled vehicles, radioactivity, and disrupted services, must also be considered. It is not enough to presuppose that if one learns how to problem-solve for a particular situation that this will automatically transfer to other situations. This phenomenon may occur to some degree but what is also needed is an exposure to those techniques applicable to other environments or situations. Thus, being exposed to one specialty, such as primitive Indian skills which are applicable to a semi-arid environment may not help the individual survive a winter blizzard with a stalled vehicle. If the individual does not survive that situation or survives it badly, society will suffer a loss as well as that individual.

This project has attempted to provide some guidelines for the practitioner in developing a course for Survival Education. While the author or the project do not presume to be the "final word" in Survival Education, it should be noted that the presented course design has produced good results when utilized. Doubtless there exists many other design types which work equally as well. Despite the type of program or the course design, the keywords have been and will continue to be: comprehensiveness, effectiveness, quality, and safety.

ENDNOTES

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See Appendix K for a more comprehensive Bibliography as presented in Robert Stoffel's, Emergency Preparedness Today.